Letters to the Editor

Questions regarding MOFD underfunding

ported a morale issue at MOFD be- of live or dead tree roots on pipe-If this is true, employee expectations are unrealistic.

finances for a decade and make the tree removals across the state. If following observations:

* Since MOFD was formed 20 years ago, its tax revenue has increased from \$9 million to \$23 million, a 150 percent increase, more than twice as much as inflation (66 percent).

* The latest audited financials show MOFD with \$71 million in underfunded retirement benefits. This assumes that the plans' assets will earn 7% in the future. The reason that the plans are underfunded is that their assets have not been able to earn at that rate. If a more change realistic rate, 6%, was assumed, MOFD retirement plans would be Hurricane Harvey, an "unprecunderfunded by about \$100 million.

* For MOFD to have paid the three ways. salaries and benefits and to have fully funded the retirement benefits promised to the employees over the past 20 years, its revenue would have had to increase to \$32 million by now, 3.5 times what it was in 1997 when MOFD was It also increases the height of hurformed. That would be four times ricane storm surges of sea water what inflation has increased. That onto the land. is what its employee compensation policies have actually cost the taxpayers.

* The increase in revenue has mostly gone to increases in employee compensation as this accounts for 85% of the MOFD budget.

* We currently have the same level of service (17 firefighters in five the ocean heats up, it turns into wastations) as we did when MOFD was formed.

is low because they are concerned that they will not be able to see past increases repeated over the next 20 er. 2016 was the warmest year years as we pay off the debts of the since records began in 1880. And past 20 years, they need to question the rate of increase in air temperawho asked for those past increases ture is also accelerating. Warmer and why the community does not air holds more moisture than cooldeserve to share in the benefits of er air and that increases rainfall increased revenue going forward.

Steve Cohn

Orinda

PG&E tree removal

Last week PG&E provided a "Pipeline Information for the City of Lafayette" document to residents with outstanding questions about gas pipeline safety operations in Lafayette. It's important to note that this information is incomplete and there are significant questions yet to be answered. PG&E should know that their responsibility and commitment to an open community forum must be satisfied prior to any tree removal. Yes, the report includes many details, but even our government and the fossil fuel

these beg more questions. Save Lafayette Trees brought a CEQA lawsuit against the City of Lafayette and PG&E because we believe the CPSI agreement that the City made without prior notice to residents is unlawful. Save Lafayette Trees is endorsed by the Lafayette Homeowners Council, Sustainable Lafayette, and the Mt. Diablo Audubon Society. These organizations represent thousands of citizens, many of whom are of Congress. See https://www.clicontributing to this lawsuit. We are asking the City to rescind the agreement.

with customers. Residents ques- matelobby.org/), https://350.org/, tion the integrity of the CPSI program. If the City were to rescind liance (http://orindaprogressives. the agreement and PG&E would accept the rescission, the com- book (https://www.facebook.com/ munity could collaborate with our groups/626446120888654/). City leaders and PG&E on ensuring pipeline safety now and for the Jim Ulrick future while effectively preserving Orinda our natural environment. This collaboration would build our trust.

Residents need to know that PG&E plans on removing trees but will be leaving their roots in The Weekly has reported on the place. The CPSI claim is that roots magnitude of unfunded employee could potentially lead to corrosion. retirement benefits by the area's PG&E's own survey makes no dispublic agencies. It has also re-tinction between potential impact cause some Directors wish to use line integrity. The pictures PG&E revenue to cure the pension and represents of tree roots wrapped tiree medical plans' underfunding. around pipeline shows segments that were fully excavated. That will not be the case in Lafayette I have been following MOFD's and it's not been the case in CPSI you are a resident who has made an agreement with PG&E to have your trees removed and have any second thoughts, we recommend you contact PG&E to ask if you can rescind (recall) your agreement. You may also contact us at savelafayettetrees@gmail.org and we will gladly assist you.

www.lamorindaweekly.com

Gina and Michael Dawson Lafayette

Hurricane Harvey and climate

edented storm," was unequivocally enhanced by global warming in

First, sea levels are 7 inches higher than they were 100 years ago. And the rate of increase is accelerating. This increases flooding by raising the baseline for rivers and water running off of the land.

Second, the ocean is warmer. More than 90 percent of the warming that has happened on Earth over the past 50 years has occurred in the ocean. During Harvey, Gulf ocean temperatures were 3 to 7 degrees above average. Hurricanes feed off heat from the water. When ter vapor. As water vapor rises, it cools, condenses into rain, and re-If MOFD's employee morale leases heat that creates the spiraling winds.

And third, the air itself is warmintensity. More than 50 inches of rain were recorded for Harvey.

We can't say Harvey wouldn't have happened but for global warming. We can say that this The root of the problem with hurricane was enhanced by global warming, which is caused by our continuing use of fossil fuels. "Unprecendented" storms have become the new normal and will become more severe in the future as these three enhancing factors continue to increase.

> Climate chaos resulting from global warming is right up there with nuclear annihilation among threats to the survival of humanity. The current rate of change in the earth's climate and species extinction is explosive in geologic time.

Climate change is a choice that industry are making. The longer we continue this dangerous "experiment" with the earth's climate, the harder it will become to control, much less reverse. It is imperative now that our elected officials stand up against climate denial and demand that the Administration and Congress commit to long-term climate action to avoid the impending climate chaos.

Call and write your members mate.gov/#understandingClimate for more information. Join local action groups, such as Citizen's PG&E has a goal to build trust Climate Lobby (https://citizenscliand Orinda Progressive Action Alwixsite.com/opaa) and on face-

Opinions in Letters to the Editor are the express views of the writer and not necessarily those of the Lamorinda Weekly. All published letters will include the writer's name and city/town of residence -- we will only accept letters from those who live in, or own a business in, the communities comprising Lamorinda (please give us your phone number for verification purposes only). Letters should be 350 words or less; letters of up to 500 words will be accepted on a space-available Visit www.lamorindaweekly. com for submission guidelines. Email: letters@lamorindaweekly.com; Regular mail: Lamorinda Weekly, P.O.Box 6133, Moraga, CA 94570

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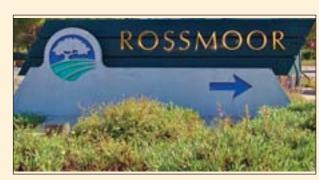


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